

Observing shabbat affects the jewish way of life religion essay



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Shabbat is a Jewish holy day which occurs each week from sunset on Friday till sunset on Saturday. Observing Shabbat every week emphasizes the discipline and commitment of Jews because they have to follow 39 of the 613 mitzvot that apply to Shabbat. As with any festival, Shabbat affects the life of the people observing it. In some ways there are positive effects and in others there are negative. Orthodox Jews' lives are affected more than reform Jews' since it is simpler for reform Jews because they can almost ignore certain melachot that they believe do not suit modern society. Furthermore, young Jews are affected in different ways from adult Jews but from everyone a high level of obedience is required.

In Judaism Shabbat is an opportunity to get away from the boredom of everyday life. It is a time to enjoy and relax, but most of all to spend some quality time with the family which for many is not possible throughout the week, since they are occupied with their working lives. The family and community are very important within Jewish life, but many Jewish families don't have the opportunity to sit down around the table as a family, chat and have a meal. Shabbat allows these families to spend time together and reflect on the previous week because it is insisted by the melachot that no work may be done. This allows them to relax without any interruptions such as the telephone ringing. If there are children in the family then parents will tell stories too which is a fun way of continuing the Jewish tradition. So one good way in which Shabbat affects a Jew's life is that families can form strong bonds with one another and can learn how to enjoy one another's company. In addition, in Shabbat women can socialise with family and close

neighbours. If one is living in a Jewish community then others too will be celebrating Shabbat so therefore Jews feel a sense of belonging.

Furthermore Shabbat is also known as the day of rest, reflection and prayer and is a time for Jews to find the true meaning of life and find peace within oneself. Some Jews will become so worked up within their lives that they may forget their sole purpose of living: 'To hallow G-d's name', and 'To love G-d (mitzvot). Shabbat allows a day to remember God and devote time to worship and thank him. Because no electrical items can be used such as computers, TV's and mobiles there are no distractions. A lack of distractions helps to encourage a greater spirituality. For nearly all families Shabbat will be the only day when such distractions won't be present. Also, the boys of the Jewish family will go to the synagogue and study the Torah which brings them closer to God. Throughout Shabbat the family will listen and recite different prayers which again bring them closer to God. So another positive effect Shabbat has on Jewish living is that they are more likely to use the quality time to pray, worship, and thank and remember God.

Although there are some advantages of observing Shabbat in terms of the way of living of Jews, there are many disadvantages too. First of all, Jewish laws prohibit doing any form of work on Shabbat. This includes turning on a light, lighting a fire, cooking, cleaning, driving a car, and writing. There are many things that don't seem like work to us; however the Jewish concept of the word work involves creating something. Because of these rules everything for Shabbat has to be prepared before. All food must be cooked before or can be kept on a blech so it slowly cooks. All lights must be turned on before and have to be kept on through the duration of the festival. This is <https://assignbuster.com/observing-shabbat-affects-the-jewish-way-of-life-religion-essay/>

a big responsibility for the woman of the house since she also must beckon in Shabbat. This festival is extremely demanding of commitment, patience and time. The men have to repeatedly go to the synagogue with the boys of the family and have to study the Talmud, and recite Kiddush. The males also have to perform Havdalah (separation) when they come home from the synagogue.

In addition, Jews have to attend the synagogue. However they have to walk since in the Torah the melachot states that it is forbidden to carry anything from a private place to a public place. Some Jews might live far from their nearest synagogue and therefore they wouldn't be able to walk: 'not to travel on Shabbat outside the limits of one's place of residence' (mitzvah), so missing out on going to the synagogue on Shabbat. However this would then be going against another of the mitzvahs: 'To appear in the sanctuary on the festivals'.

Another way that Shabbat affects the life of a Jew is this time from the view of a child. In order to be at home in time for Shabbat both children and adults will have to leave work and school early (about 2 o'clock). If the family aren't living in a Jewish community then the children may easily feel embarrassed when their friends ask why they always leave school early every week. Also, children studying for GCSE's won't be allowed to go on trips because of the strict rule of observing Shabbat. Missing such trips could in turn affect the child's coursework etc. In addition because no work can be done during Shabbat, children's homework is also affected. They only have a Sunday to do it and as children grow older they'll get big projects. So

Shabbat has a negative effect on children's education.

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Furthermore, an orthodox Jewish child wouldn't be allowed to join clubs and training sessions on weekends. They wouldn't be allowed to go to parties which are usually on a Friday or Saturday. They wouldn't even be allowed a weekend job. Because of this Jewish children will have a different routine to their friends and so will find it hard to find time to spend with them.

Weekends are a time when most teenagers like to socialise and hang out with their friends. All during the week they have been going to school so mostly staying at home. Teenagers must find it very difficult to abide the rules since they aren't allowed to socialise with Gentile. Shabbat isn't a time to hang out and socialise with friends, it is valuable time that should be spent with family. This could possibly make teenagers turn against their own religion.

In addition to Shabbat affecting a child's education and social life, it can also be seen as quite boring and tedium especially for those brought up in the modern western world. Shabbat means no TV, no mobile, no video games, no iPod, no computer. All children have is their family with whom they must talk and the Talmud which they must study. People should be quiet and introspective on this day, so for some Jewish children, their weekend is pretty boring. For adults also, Shabbat could be boring since no shopping can be done and no leisurely activities either. This negative feeling from some Jews may result in them turning against their own religion as mentioned above. Young Jews especially may decide to discontinue this tradition in their own families in the future.

For all Jews a great deal of patience must be required to observe Shabbat.

People who do not observe Shabbat think of it as a day filled with
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meaningless restrictions, and a waste of a weekend. Many Jewish children probably think it's boring, and would much rather swap their weekend with a child of another religion. The woman of the family has to put a lot of work beforehand into preparations for the festival. However to those who do observe Shabbat, it is a precious jewel that God has given to his people and a time of great joy that Jews look forward to every week. It is a time to set aside concerns and enjoy the company of others. It is also a time to reflect upon oneself and become closer to Lord himself.